

Del Laine has left her mark on South Lake Tahoe in ways that many local residents might not know. She was a mover and shaker, whose focus was on making the city a better place. Her most important role, though, was promoting the well-being of women.

This pioneer died Dec. 18, 2020, at home with family at her side. She was 90.

She was born Dolores Mae Wright on March 20, 1930, in Oakland, Calif., to Mabel and Leslie Wright.

Four years later her parents leased a U.S. Forest Service cabin in Meyers. It became the family summer home and to this day remains part of her legacy. It would be several years before Del would call Lake Tahoe home on a full-time basis, but once she did she never left. Even after having a home in town, Del could be found at the cabin most summers. It was almost like living off the grid.

Del earned a bachelor's degree in recreation from San Francisco State University and a master's in recreation management from UC Berkeley.

She spent time in Canada with friends on what was to be a girls' road trip. A few, including Del, decided to stay. They were newly minted college graduates who had ideas of how to better the recreation program in their adopted town. Eventually, though, Del found herself back in Tahoe as director of the city's recreation division.

Reading and writing had long been part of Del's life. Her book collection was in the thousands, with some first editions and many personally signed to her because she actually knew the author.

She wrote for *Lake Tahoe News*, the original print version, with the byline Del Wright. It was an eight-column weekly newspaper that was transformed into a daily for two weeks during the 1960 Winter Olympics at Squaw Valley. She was 30 years old with a dream assignment. She had access to Squaw Valley founder Alex Cushing, as well as the athletes—winners and losers. On some days seven Olympic stories covered the entire front page. Del wrote features about the athletes, how beef was the primary food served to them, the use of metal skis for the first time, how the Europeans were skeptical of the timekeepers' abilities, and the records that were smashed.

Del also wrote for a variety of publications on a freelance basis.

She met her future husband, Ed Laine (1931-2018), while both volunteered for Lake Tahoe Children's Theatre in South Lake Tahoe; which she had founded. They married March 30, 1962. They also worked together at the *Tahoe Daily Tribune*. He was in advertising and photography, she wrote columns for the paper about skiing, hiking, bowling, fishing, gossip and other activities. In 1967, they left the newspaper to open Laine Associates, an advertising agency. They transformed that into Laine Photography and finally Laine Photolabs. The one-hour photo business moved from South Lake Tahoe to Round Hill in 1989. It closed in 2010, with daughter Brooke Laine running the shop at the time.

Del turned her attention to other pursuits after leaving the family business. She was elected to the South Lake Tahoe City Council in 1976 and 1984, twice serving as mayor. Some of the boards and committees she served included: Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Urban Design Committee, Tahoe Basin Transportation Authority, Tahoe Regional Transportation District, advisory committee to California Department Transportation, Lake Tahoe Historical Society, Happy Homestead Cemetery board, Lake Tahoe Educational Foundation, South Tahoe Women's Center, and National Women's Political Caucus.

She was instrumental in getting redevelopment off the ground in the city as a way to compete with other tourist destinations. Del was also a key player in creating the original loop road as it exists today.

Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe was one of the organizations dearest to Del's heart. This is where she thrived. She served as president, regional governor and was founder/coordinator of the Soroptimist Legislative Workshop. To her, women helping women was a concept for much of her life. She was an advocate for young women, and that support and love carried on long after she first met someone.

Del is survived by daughters Brooke Laine (Jose Olivares), Alison Reynolds (Brian) and Paige Dinh (Phillip); son Paul Laine; sister Paula Simmons; grandchildren Nikolas and Matthew (Tess) Olivares-Laine, Jason, Austin, Maegan, Trevin and Collin Reynolds, and Shelby, Chandler and Kaylee Dinh; and nephews Craig Simmons (Stephanie) and Mark Simmons (Jami).

Donations may be sent to Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe, Softball Fund, P.O. Box 2179, Stateline, NV 89449.

A celebration of life will be planned for the spring or early summer 2021 at the Celio Ranch in Meyers, Calif.